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Baby Steps

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#238 A STRAW TO CLING ON
THERE ARE TWO MAJOR REASONS...
THE FIRST IS THAT KANDA-KUN'S EGG BALL EXCEEDED MY EXPECTATIONS...
MY CRUCIAL FIRST SERVICE GAME WAS BROKEN...
IT'S NOT A SHOT...
THAT I CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IF MY TIMING MATCHES IT.
BECAUSE THE POWER AND SPIN OF THE BALL ARE HIGH, AFTER GOING STRAIGHT FORWARD IT SUDDENLY DROPS AND MAKES A STRONG, ELONGATED BOUNCE. I DON'T WANT TO MOVE BACK SO I TRY TO GET IT ON THE RISE, BUT BECAUSE OF CONTROLLING THE BALL'S IMPACT POINT, USING CHANGE-OF-PACE IS DIFFICULT...

I KNOW IT'S KABAI TECHNICAL'S TENNIS, BUT...
THE OTHER IS KANDA-KUN'S AGGRES-SIVENESS.
先手必勝!
IF IT'S GOING WELL, IF THE RISK IS TOO HIGH IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO KEEP THIS UP INDEFINITELY...
FIRING THIS MANY ACES RIGHT FROM THE START IS DOING TOO MUCH, UNDER ANY CIRCUM-STANCES...
IT'S NOT ONLY DIFFERENT, BUT THE SHOT IS ALSO FAST AND STRONG. IT'S NOT JUST A MATTER OF HAVING TO GET USED TO IT.
IS YOUR MENTAL STRENGTH DUE TO YOUR CONFIDENCE IN YOUR ANALYTICAL ABILITY WITH DATA...?
YOU PROBABLY EXPECT THAT YOU CAN DEAL WITH YOUR OPPONENT REGARDLESS OF THE SITUATION, BUT
... NOT SOMEBODY LIKE ME SINCE I ENTERED KABAI.

IT'S FAST AGAIN... BARELY IN, TOO!
ABOUT ONE YEAR EARLIER...

GAME, SET, WON BY ANDOU. 6 - 3.
HEY KANDA, GET UP!
A LOSS IS FIVE LAPS ON THE OUTSIDE PERIMETER. GET GOING!
SAY, HASN'T KANDA DONE 20 LAPS TODAY ALREADY?
THAT MEANS 20 KM ISN'T THAT HARSH?
HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO LIE THERE?
...OI
DON'T YOU KNOW IT'S 10 MORE LAPS IF YOU GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES ON THE COURT, EXCEPT IF YOU FALL DOWN?
IT'S UNFAIR I TELL YOU!!
A MATCH AFTER YOU RUN ME TO DEATH?
IT'S IT'S BECAUSE YOU CAN'T WIN WHEN YOU PLAY HONESTLY

ARE YOU MAKING EXCUSES FOR GETTING MAD AT A SENPAI? YOU WANNA DIE?!
YOU!
YOU STILL DON'T KNOW WHERE THIS IS, DO YOU?
CO-COACH...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
WELL, I FIGURED ON SCHOOLING A KOUHAI MYSELF, BU...
KANDA!
NO, NOT YOU.

WILL ONLY FIVE LAPS BE ENOUGH? I'LL KEEP YOU RUNNING FOREVER UNTIL YOU UNDERSTAND
YOU REALLY DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT KABAI SPIRIT IS...
YOU HAD ENOUGH CHANCES TO WIN THE MATCH JUST NOW...
USING THAT COURT IN SUCH A WASTEFUL MANNER...
DIDN'T HE ONLY WATCH THE START?!
YES SIR!!
SHIRAE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPERVISING YOU. STAY ON GUARD.
!!
THAT SHIT-HEAD...
ARE YOU SERIOUS?!

WHAT IS KABAI SPIRIT?!
ISN'T IT JUST BEING UNFAIR?!
WHAT'S WITH THIS GOOD-FOR-NOTHING TOPSY-TURVY CONNECTION?!
DOESN'T THAT OLD IDIOT WHO JUST THROWS HIS WEIGHT AROUND UNDERSTAND?!
I WONT GET STRONGER JUST BY SIMPLY RUNNING!
DON'T TELL ME THAT HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY INTENTION OF CRUSHING ME... HE PROBABLY DOES...
IT'S INEFFICIENT! EVERYONE'S STUPID, SO NOBODY PAYS ATTENTION TO SOMETHING LIKE THAT...
I'LL GO ON A RAMPAGE BEFORE THEN... NO, SOMETHING LIKE THAT IS MEANINGLESS. I'LL GO AND ESCAPE!
BUT...
THERE'S NO ESCAPE!

HALT!
TOO...
TOO MUCH...

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YES!
SPEAK UP.
YES...
THERE WON'T BE A REPEAT OF DEFYING SOMEBODY WHO'S YOUR SENIOR
AND DON'T MAKE EXCUSES FOR LOSING EVEN IF YOU DIE.
ナニ…
THEN SINCE IT SEEMS YOU REALLY DON'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING I'LL TELL YOU.
I'M WARNING YOU. LEARN IT WELL.

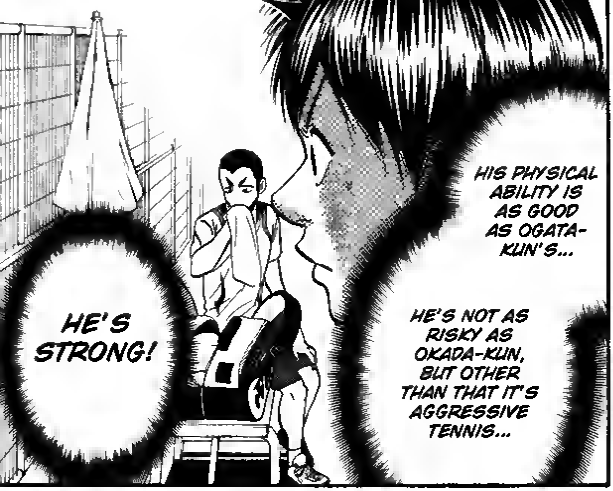
TENNIS...
VICTORY TO THE ONE... MAKES THE FIRST MOVE.
TENNIS IS A FIGHT ON THE COURT.
THE RULE IN FIGHTS IS "VICTORY GOES TO THE ONE WHO MAKES THE FIRST MOVE!"
IT'S WHETHER OR NOT YOU CAN CAUSE LETHAL DAMAGE TO YOUR OPPONENT'S VITALS FIRST WITHOUT HESITATION.
I'M TELLING YOU THAT IT'S NOT A MATTER OF HAVING TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE...
IF YOU COULD DO THAT THEN YOU WOULDN'T HAVE LOST TODAY.
REFLECT ON IT AND MAKE THE MOST OF IT NEXT TIME.
THE MAIN POINT IS WHETHER OR NOT YOU CAN SERIOUSLY CONTEMPLATE KILLING YOUR OPPONENT FIRST.

HOWEVER, GUYS WHO HAVE BEEN IN REAL FIGHTS ARE EXPELLED FROM SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY.
WHEN MIND AND BODY ARE TRULY WORN OUT, ONE COMPLETELY CLINGS TO THE WORDS THAT ARE CLOSE AT HAND WITHOUT HESITATION ..
GET BACK!
5 MORE MINUTES!
WHEN THE CONFIDENCE CAUSED BY HIS SMOOTH SAILING WAS SMASHED AT THE ROOT,
THE DISPOSITION TO ACT BEFORE THINKING, WHETHER WHAT HE WAS DOING NOW WAS CORRECT OR NOT, SPROUTED.
WHILE SURVIVING, ONE DAY HE WAS ABLE TO UNDERSTAND...

VICTORY GOES TO THE ONE WHO MAKES THE FIRST MOVE!
THIS IS THE MOST EFFICIENT TACTIC.

I WAS DEFEATED AT THE VERY BEGINNING HERE IN KABAI... IT IS THIS THAT I HAVE TO GIVE THE HIGHEST PRIORITY AT THE BEGINNING.
RGH
FIRST IS MAKING YOUR OPPONENT REALIZE WHICH OF YOU IS SUPERIOR BY BREAKING YOUR OPPONENT'S SPIRIT BEFORE HE THINKS.
KO
AN HONOR STUDENT LIKE YOU, WHO DOESN'T LOOK LIKE YOU'VE BEEN IN A FIGHT, WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.

YEAH!
GAME, KANDA. 3 - 0.
OKAY KANDA, NICE STREAK!
LET'S OPEN UP THE LEAD!


HE'S STRONG!
HIS PHYSICAL ABILITY IS AS GOOD AS OGATA-KUN'S...
HE'S NOT AS RISKY AS OKADA-KUN, BUT OTHER THAN THAT IT'S AGGRESSIVE TENNIS...

HE'S PULLING AWAY. WHAT'S MORE, HE'S COMING ON STRONG..

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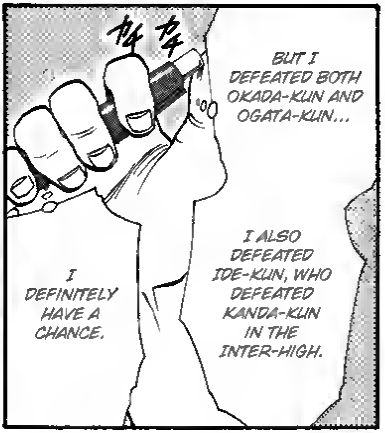
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BUT I DEFEATED BOTH OKADA-KUN AND OGATA-KUN...
I ALSO DEFEATED IDE-KUN, WHO DEFEATED KANDA-KUN IN THE INTER-HIGH.
I DEFINITELY HAVE A CHANCE.

THAT NOTE-BOOK...
ONE PROBLEM AT A TIME...
FIRST, A COUNTER-MEASURE FOR THE EGG BALL...
NEXT, HOW TO COUNTER THAT AGGRESSION...
カキカキカキ
TIME!
SOME-THING I OUGHT TO DO AT THE START...
NATURALLY, THE FIRST IS...

INCREASE THE RISK WITH A FAST SERVE!

15 - 0.
OKAY, IF I MAKE A POINT WITH MY SERVE, THEN I CAN SHUT OUT BOTH HIS EGG BALL AND HIS QUICK ATTACK.
BUT THERE'S A LIMIT TO THIS...
THE POWER SUDDENLY IMPROVED. HIS AIM BECAME TIGHTER, TOO.
AN ORDINARY HONOR STUDENT WON'T GET THIS FAR, RIGHT...?
ISN'T HE MORE OF A BOY GENIUS...?